



How to Build an Online Presence for Your Business

We can no longer think about businesses as online vs brick and mortar*. Most businesses will need to have an online presence so they continue to acquire new customers and support their existing ones. Online transactions range from simple needs such as finding what stores are nearby, searching for specific stores such as 'drug stores near me' all the way to ordering online with home deliveries. Due to the global pandemic more people of all generations are learning to do transactions online at an accelerated rate. Online is where businesses are going to find new customers and reach their most loyal customers.

The simplest place to start is to have a website. This can be one page or have a significant part of your business on it.

If you have a website then the next step would be to add a Facebook Business page and an Instagram Professional page.

Brick and Mortar refers to a traditional street-side business that offers products and services to its customers face-to-face in an office or store that the business owns or rents.

SHORTCUT: 4 Steps to Building Your Online Business

1. Create a website for your business
2. Create a Facebook business page
3. Create an Instagram professional page
4. Complete your business listing on Google My Business



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Building a Website

If you already have a website and a ChamberMaster web listing then skip this section.

There are a few ways you can build a website. Keep in mind even if you already have a website, putting an additional webpage on ChamberMaster allows you to reach those visitors who search the Chamber of Commerce directory. The ChamberMaster website also shows up in Google searches so it is an added bonus for your business.

Here is an example of a webpage on the ChamberMaster website:



Options for creating a website

- Mountain View Chamber of Commerce will host member's websites on ChamberMaster
- Google My Business will allow you to build a website easily for free
- You can build a simple website with any of the many website providers. Here is an example of a few:

[WordPress](#)

[WIX](#)

[Weebly](#)

[SquareSpace](#)



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Creating a Business Facebook Page

Facebook is a key place to form your community of current and potential customers.

Before you begin you will need:

1. Your exact business name and description
The recommendation is to use the same name throughout all your social media accounts so customers can find you
2. Profile photo - you can use your logo
3. Cover photo - use something customers will identify with either pictures of your product, storefront or a photo that represents what you offer
4. (Optional) Decide what 'call to action' you want users to take and add that as a button on the page.



SHORTCUT: Setting Up a Business Page, Using a Desktop Browser

1. Go to [Facebook Business Pages](#). Click on Create A Page button
2. If you don't have a Facebook account, create one with your business email address
3. Add in your Page Name and Category, these are required fields. You will have a preview of the Desktop or Mobile page on the right of your screen
4. Add a photo for the top banner
5. Let your customer know about your page. Share the news on your own Facebook page, email your customers and put your Facebook address in your storefront.

For more information go [here](#).



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Creating an Instagram Page

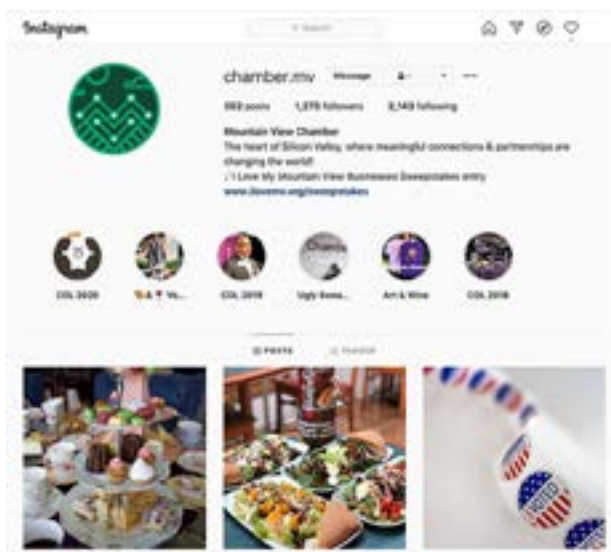
Instagram was initially released as a photo app so it is the right place to put beautiful, emotion eliciting photos and videos. It also responds well to photos with people's smiling faces. Any photo of your product or a person using or benefiting from your service will be the best post to put on Instagram.

Before you begin you will need:

1. Your exact business name for your user name, and description. You can also register with your Facebook account.

The recommendation is to use the same name throughout all your social media accounts so customers can find you.

2. Your bio or business description
3. A link to your website if you have one
4. Profile photo - you can use your logo



SHORTCUT: Setting Up a Business Instagram Account within Instagram.com

1. Create an account then change the setting on the account to a [Professional Account](#)

2. To switch your profile to a business account:

Go to your profile and tap the icon in the upper right corner

Tap Settings

Tap Account

Tap Switch to Professional Account

Tap Business



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If you'd like, you can follow the steps to connect your business account to a Facebook Page associated with your business. This step is optional, and will make it easier to use all of the features available for businesses across the Facebook family of apps. At this time, only one Facebook Page can be connected to your business account.

Add details, like your business category and contact information.

Tap Done.

Looking for the definition of the digital lingo? You can access our Digital Dictionary [here](#).

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How to Grow Your Business Through Email

Small businesses have smaller budgets, every penny spent needs to help move the business forward. Communicating directly through email allows a business to build a relationship with their customers which results in an increase in customer loyalty. Email marketing allows you to stay connected. And, it is one of the most effective ways to drive sales even for those with strict budgets.

The benefits include low cost to administer and distribute, faster than traditional mail, ability to customize your message, and flexibility to create custom campaigns for your most loyal audience. Also, the return on investment will outweigh the time and effort needed to put into action.

Most people look at their phone before they get out of bed in the morning. Keep your business top-of-mind by staying connected, so that your business is one of the first things they read about in the morning.

SHORTCUT: 6 Steps to Growing Your Business Through Email

1. Capture your customer emails. Get their first and last name, email address and enter it into a spreadsheet.
2. Select an email marketing software service to automate your email distribution
3. Determine what type of an offer you can extend, make the action you want them to take (CTA) clear and easy to understand.
4. Pick a template design that will work best for you and your offer.
5. Import your customer email list.
6. Schedule the email for distribution.



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In's and Out's of Email:

Email is a proven way to reach customers. In fact, [80% of business professionals](#) believe that email marketing increases customer retention. And with instore shopping and dining limited at best, connecting with shoppers is vital to maintaining customer loyalty.

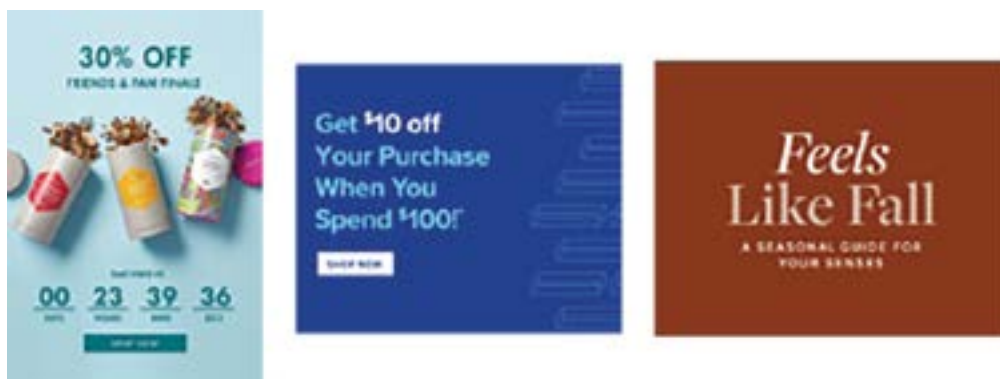
There are only a few steps required to put all the pieces together to reach your customers and increase sales, all through email. Start by capturing your customer's email address. Give them an incentive to share. Let them know that they will get special offers and advanced notifications of special sales by sharing their email. Include a signup form on your website, making it easy for customers to join your mailing list. When obtaining their email address, make sure you also get their first name and last name. Once you have set this up, create a spreadsheet that simply includes your customer email list:

Email Content

Keep it simple. More than [50% of Americans](#) are reading emails on their phone. It's important that your email is easy to read no matter what type of device they are using. You want to make it easy for your subscribers to quickly scan the contents to see what you are offering. In otherwords, no small print.

A few types of emails designed to generate a buzz and motivate customers to shop include:

- Special offers
- Limited time offers
- Seasonal promotions
- Programs for your most loyal customers



Use your email offer as a way to encourage customers to view new merchandise or a new array of entrees. Determine what action you want the them to take, to buy for instance. This is your call-to-action (CTA). For example, entice the customer to take advantage of a special offer or discount code at the time of purchase. Make it a limited time offer to instill a sense of urgency. Only include one CTA per email. Having more than one becomes distracting. It jeopardizes the action you intend the customer to take by giving them a less purposeful action, increasing the likelihood of losing them altogether. Once you know the content of your email, move to the next step using email marketing software to create the email, and schedule it for distribution.



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Email Marketing Software

The benefits of using email marketing software include no additional effort required to manage a growing list of subscribers, ability to set up one email for many email addresses, and the flexibility to schedule delivery (don't have to be online when it is set to be sent). An added benefit is being able to track to see who opened and read your email. Use that information to determine if your email subject line had impact, or your offer was viewed as being of value. The best part is the systems are easy to use.

There are a variety of email marketing services that provide automation at no-to-low cost. Most include templates and scheduling for free with a small number of recipients. Of course more features are added when you choose to subscribe to pay.

The top email marketing software, according to [PC Mag](#), which include limited free use:

- [Mailchimp](#)
- [Campaigner](#)
- [Constant Contact](#)
- [Zoho](#)
- [Sendinblue](#)

Email marketing is simply a tool to add to your marketing efforts to help you get new customers, increase loyalty, and sell more. The more effort you put into it, the greater the likelihood of success.

Below is a visual description to help you get started using email.

How to Get Started

1. Start capturing your customer email address

	A	B	C
1	First Name	Last Name	Email Address
2	Jane	Doe	janedoe@email.com
3	John	Doe	Johndoe@email.com

Note: To ensure you are compliant with the state of California, customers must choose to join your mailing list, and must have a quick and easy way to unsubscribe.



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2. Select an email marketing software service that will work best for your automation needs.



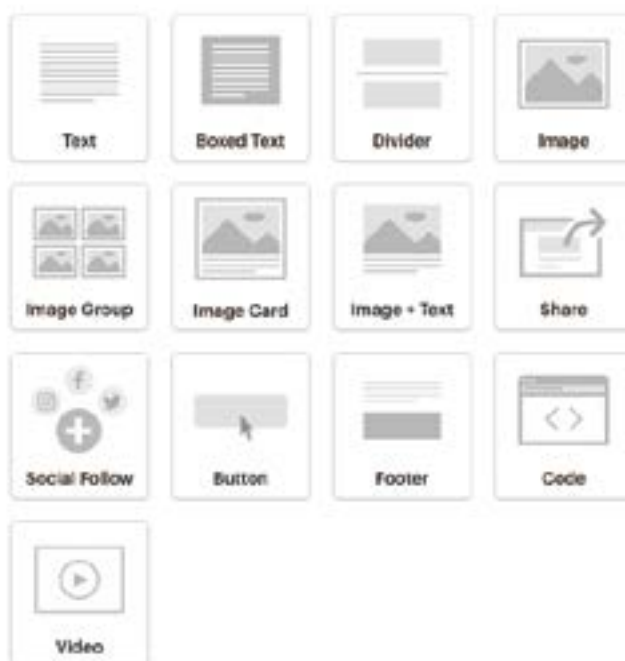
3. Write your content including the special offer that you want to share via email. This can be done in a standard Word document that can be copied into your template when ready.

4. Create the design of your email using the templates available.

Here is an example of templates:



This service also gives you various components to modify the template to best serve your needs. You can add additional images, buttons and even video.





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5. Upload your subscriber spreadsheet to the email software program.
6. Schedule your email to the designated time to be sent.

THAT'S IT! You are now a business using email to connect and communicate with your customers!

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How to use Google My Business

Google My Business is a FREE tool offered by Google that allows businesses to add essential information as a business listing, making it easy for customers to find your business via search, maps, and obtain key business details, such as a phone number and hours you are open.

Why sign up?

With COVID-19 restrictions, many businesses found themselves unable to sell, as they were not allowed to open and did not have a way to reach customers online. For some, it was a matter of not having the time to create a website, for others, it was a lack of resources. Unfortunately, not being online meant you weren't accessible to those who were shopping online.

To reach younger, tech-savvy customers, having an online presence is vital. Without a listing, your business can't be found. The key is getting the customer's attention, and making it extremely easy to buy. The less work they have to do, the greater the likelihood they will complete their purchase.

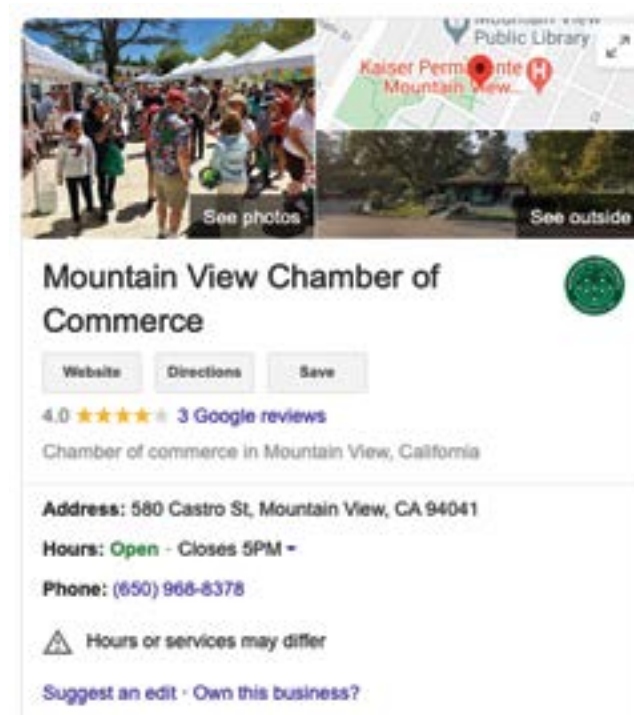
The purpose of starting with a listing on Google My Business, is to make sure your business can be located through Google Search.

SHORTCUT: 5 Steps to Signup to Google My Business

1. Go to [Google Business](#).
2. Click on the blue button 'Manage now.'
3. Verify your business by entering your address. A postcard will be sent via USPS to the address provided. The purpose is to verify that you are the owner. Simply follow the instructions on the card.
4. Continue to fill out your business profile with the Service area your business covers, your business hours, phone number, and website URL.
5. Additional categories are designed to help amplify your business within search engines. You can add product and/or service offerings, along with a brief description of your business.



Here is an example of a Business Listing:



Signing up for an account on Google My Business will make it easy for customers to find you. The listing includes one-click access to call your business, get directions, send a message, or redirect to your website. Customize your listing with pictures of your business. With customer reviews, businesses can follow and respond quickly and easily. And with their analytics, businesses can see what is most important for their customers, getting directions, accessing their website, and more.

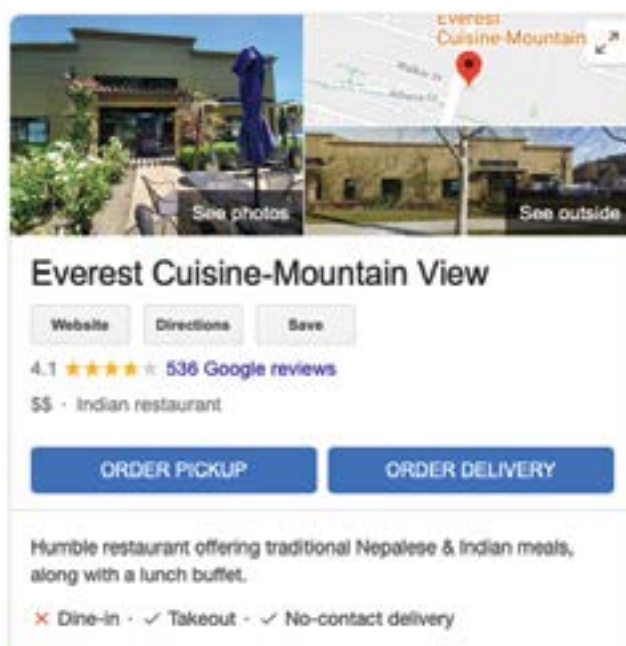
Google My Business works best for those that are local, brick-and-mortar businesses that have a physical address. They will want to verify your business location, which takes approximately 5 days. To do so, you will enter in the address of your business. They will physically mail you a postcard with a verification code and instructions on how to enter the code to complete the process of verifying your business listing. The purpose is to validate that you are the owner of the business.

Be as thorough as you can when filling out your business listing profile. The more thorough you are the easier it will be for customers to quickly gather in the details they need to shop. The information you provide will be indexed by Google, which makes it easier for others to find you when conducting a search.



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Here is an example of a business with 'ORDER PICKUP' and 'ORDER DELIVERY' buttons on their listing:



Google My Business allows you to customize your listing. For example, restaurants can include a button to 'ORDER PICKUP' or 'ORDER DELIVERY' making it very easy for customers to order immediately rather than having to go to their website, or download an app to order. Simply providing details such as 'Dine-in', 'Takeout', 'No-contact delivery' is helpful to interested customers. In addition, businesses can include a photo of their store front and a picture of your most popular entree. For a boutique, add the latest clothing style for the fashionista's of the world.

And as a bonus, Google My Business includes a Marketing Kit that will help you to create marketing materials such as posters, stickers and posts for social media, with the goal of helping you to reach customers and sell.

Location, location, location. For the year 2020, this translates into having a presence online. One of the best investments you can make is to create a listing on Google My Business. Help your customers locate and buy from you with ease.



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Additional Resources

For a step-by-step video of how to signup see:

[Grow with Google](#)

And for a step-by-step guide see:

[‘Get Your Local Business on Google Search and Maps’](#)

Take a look at the [Back to Business: Managing Your Business Remotely video](#) from the Mountain View Chamber of Commerce.

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How to use Social Media to Increase Business

Social media allows you to easily and quickly engage with your current and potential customers. You can promptly promote offers, your amazing products or services as well as share relevant news to keep customers up to date. Whether you are getting started or need to increase your social media engagement, see below for more information.

Why use social media?

Social media platforms enable you to form a meaningful community with your customers and potential customers. Today people read what other people are saying or what experience they have visiting a business. People share their stories online through reviews, comments and photos and videos. Social media improves your reach, frequency and quality of communications with your community.

The Mountain View Chamber of Commerce will help you with all of this when they start promoting businesses and you will want to have a social presence to take advantage of this benefit.

SHORTCUT: 4 Steps to Leveraging Social Media to Increase Business

1. Inventory where your social media is now.
2. Pick one or two that work best for your business.
3. Create a Facebook and/or Instagram page.
4. Build a social media community.



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Leveraging Social Media to Increase Business

1. Inventory

Take a look at your social media accounts and inventory how many followers you have.

2. Pick a social media platform

Finding a social media platform that works for your business may be obvious or it may take some time to test what works best. To begin we recommend that you start with a Facebook page and even an Instagram page, if your business has anything visual such as food, fashion or events. A business page is preferred for hospitality, restaurants, hotels and retail. It allows you to share ownership and teams can all post and work on the page. Personal pages work if you are part of your business and brand.

Hot Tips

To tag the Mountain View Chamber of Commerce use @chambermv in your post.
Send your most recent business photos to the Chamber for additional promotional opportunities.

- If your business has a presence on Facebook and you tag the MVCC then your post will get shared.
- If your business has a presence on Instagram and you tag the MVCC then your post will be shared through an Instagram Story.

Demographics of Facebook and Instagram

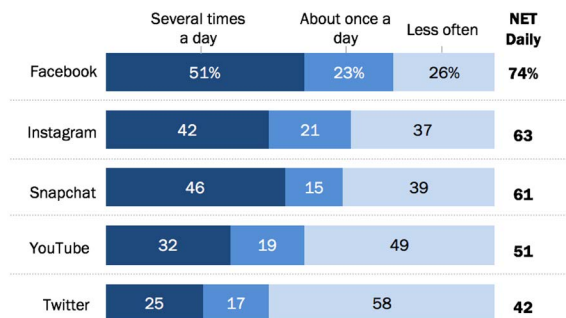
Why Facebook: Reaches a wide range of ages - 18 to 65 year olds. Of US adults who say they use Facebook, 74% use it daily (51% of users are on more than once per day). In the US, 75% of women and 63% of men are on Facebook.

Why Instagram: Reaches a wide age range but leans towards a younger audience of 18 - 49 years olds (72% are 13 - 17). Of all US adults who say they use Instagram, 63% use it daily (42% of users are on more than once per day); 35% of US teens rate Instagram as their favorite social network, second only to Snapchat.



Roughly three-quarters of Facebook users visit the site on a daily basis

Among U.S. adults who say they use ___, % who use each site ...



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown. "Less often" category includes users who visit these sites a few times a week, every few weeks or less often. Source: Survey conducted Jan. 8-Feb. 7, 2019.

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3. Create Facebook and/or Instagram page

The advantages of having a business account for both Facebook and Instagram is that you have access to Insights. Insights can help you understand who is engaging with your business. Learn how to create a Business Facebook page and an Business Instagram page with our [How to Build an Online Presence for Your Business guide.](#)

4. Build a social media community

Once you have Facebook and Instagram pages you can now build your community.

Hot Tips

How to post a photo:

- Put the smart phone camera in the HDR setting as it helps to sharpen the focus
- For lighting, use natural light. Shoot near a window or use an affordable white backdrop with a good light.



SHORTCUT: 3 Steps to Planning Your Content for Social Media

1. Create a simple plan
2. Create a timeline
3. Create the content

3 Steps to Planning Your Content for Social Media

1. Create a simple plan

A simple plan is key to keeping you focused and setting an achievable goal. A plan can be to raise more awareness of your business and its offerings. Or it can be to just keep your customers up to date with your latest menu or specials. Start with one goal and then watch the Facebook and Instagram insights to see what resonates with your audience. Remember to share relevant and authentic content.

2. Create a timeline

Use a spreadsheet to create a timeline. Make a list of dates for when you need to make edits or updates. This allows you to plan ahead what you will post each week.

3. Create the content

Gather up images and potential copy for both your Facebook and Instagram posts. You will want to use a few hashtags. Have a hashtag for either your business name or your tagline/branding. You can also add hashtags for seasonal and popular trending events. Or you can simply use a hashtag that reflects your content.

A hashtag is a word or a phrase introduced by a number sign, #, otherwise known as a hashtag. It groups together content or images that appear in social media, such as Twitter, so that users can then go to that hashtag and see all the news or content related to it.

List relevant hashtags in your posts, such as those that are in your profile bio and those that regularly appear in your other posts. Use branded hashtags (#yourcompanyname) or popular hashtags (#learning) and put it at the end of the Facebook post.

For Instagram, since it was started as a photos app, users respond best to images that evoke emotion. This could be a beautiful photo or one of mouth watering food. Also, users respond more often when there are smiling people in the photos. Your hashtags fit in one of these four categories: Product, Lifestyle, Event, Location. Lastly, Instagram has a feature named Stories where you can highlight a short video clip or a few annotated photos. Instagram Stories are gaining in popularity and might be a good feature to use to attract followers.



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Key items to keeping your social media working for you

- Post often
Use the Facebook scheduler to post at least weekly
- Keep in mind why people are on Facebook
To take a break, check in on friends and stay up-to-date with the news or current events
- Show visual consistency so customers recognize you

Additional information

For additional information on how Facebook can help you go to [Facebook for Small Businesses](#).

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How to Create a Virtual Video Tour

The virtual video tour is an additional way to get customers to see your business, store or restaurant, especially when customers are hesitant about physically going out. Businesses doing video tours are becoming more and more popular and customers are happy to watch and listen from the safety of their home. Some customers view the video before they visit your store so it's the first impression they have of your business.

Why create a virtual video tour?

More customers can see what you have to offer. They can shop virtually and spend as much time as they need deciding what they want to buy. They spend less time in the physical store once they decide what they want to buy allowing you to keep your store compliant to Covid-19 rules and allowing more customers to come in and out. Make new videos as your seasonal merchandise changes. Customers can tour before they decide on where to hold a special event at a venue or restaurant.

Options for style of video

- Photo video: Take images and put them into a video; add in background music
- Narrated video: Walk through your shop or restaurant and describe what viewers are seeing.
- Panorama video: Google 360 Virtual* tour, for example created with 360 Panorama
- Gif style video - short video with no sound

SHORTCUT: 3 Steps to Creating a Virtual Video Tour

1. Write out a script, story or plan.
2. Take video on your smartphone.
3. Take photos of your product or customers.
4. Upload it to your social media account, YouTube channel or your webpage.



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Video Tips

1. Lighting - use natural light or shoot near a window -- The most important part of your video.
2. Smile - if you are going to be on the video then smile or have people that are smiling.
3. Music and sound - sets the mood, has to match what the video is showing
4. Editing - if you choose to edit your file know the features or get someone that does
5. Motion - keep the camera moving to keep it interesting
6. Location and time of day - put the camera in front of you at eye level, clean up the area around with stuff that does not apply. Light is best at early morning or in the evening before sunset (colors will be the best).

Hot Tips

- Keep it short, 3 seconds to 3 minutes
- Images should be in focus and clear
- Keep camera steady with a tripod or phone stabilizer
- Use an affordable mic for clearer sound quality, especially when narrating

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Mountain View Chamber of Commerce Digital Dictionary

Get the definitions you need to understand the terminology used when conducting business online.

Brick-and-mortar

Pertains to conventional stores, businesses, etc., having physical buildings and facilities, as opposed to internet or remote services.

Business Listing

Google My Business (commonly known as GMB, and formerly known as GoogleLocal and Google Places) is a business listing on Google, not unlike listings on online business directories such as Yelp.

Buzz

To create interest in a product or service.

Call to action (CTA)

In advertising material - a piece of content intended to induce a viewer, reader, or listener to perform a specific act, typically taking the form of an instruction or directive (e.g. buy now or click here).

Customer loyalty

Customer loyalty is a measure of a customer's likeliness to do repeat business with a company or brand.

Customer retention

The process of engaging existing customers to continue buying products or services from your business.

Facebook Insights

Facebook Audience Insights gives you aggregate information about two groups of people—people connected to your Page and people on Facebook—so you can create content that resonates and easily find more people like the ones in your current audience.



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Google Virtual 360 tour

Google Street View is a complete 360° tour of your business using the most popular search engine in the world. Allows your customers who find you via Google, Google Maps & Street View to enter and see inside of your business and 'walk around'.

Hashtag

A word or phrase preceded by a hash mark (#), used within a message to identify a keyword or topic of interest and facilitate a search for it:

Branded hashtags

A branded hashtag is a hashtag that's unique to your business. It can be as simple as your company name, tagline, or the name of one of your products or campaigns.

Popular hashtags

Top hashtags are the most popular hashtags other users are looking for.

Indexed by Google

A page is indexed by Google if it has been visited by the Google crawler ("Googlebot"), analyzed for content and meaning, and stored in the Google index. Indexed pages can be shown in Google Search results.

Instagram Insights

Instagram Insights is a native analytics tool that provides data on follower demographics and actions, as well as your content. This information makes it easy to compare content, measure campaigns, and see how individual posts are performing. To access Instagram Insights, you need a business account.

Instagram Story

Instagram Stories allow Instagram users to share photos and videos to their "Story" -- which is visible to followers of the user's Instagram account -- and to specific users the Story's sender follows. A story only lasts for 24 hours.



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Return on investment (ROI)

The amount of profit, before tax and after depreciation, from an investment made, usually expressed as a percentage of the original total cost invested.

Tagging

On social media, the act of tagging, or to tag, is done by adding a hashtag into your social media post. This engages an individual, business or any entity with a social profile when you mention them in a post or comment.

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REFERENCES

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